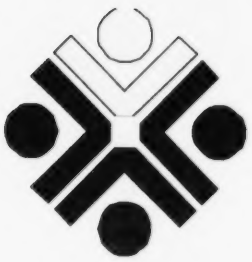

ELECTIONS BC
Province of British Columbia

# SERVICE PLAN

2002/03 – 2004/05

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## 2002/03 – 2004/05


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# Letter from the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer

This document replaces the 2002/03 – 2004/05 Service Plan provided in November 2001 to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. The revised plan reflects adjustments to objectives, resources and expenditure projections resulting from the 2002/03 budget allocation, and identifies challenges and strategies for the years ahead.

The format of the plan has been modified to address concerns expressed by the Committee regarding consistency of reports. This plan is modeled on the Service Plan tabled by the Auditor General in February 2002, and on plans developed by a number of Ministries.

I hope the Committee finds this plan to be informative and useful. Fiscal restraint is a reality we must all accept. Elections BC is committed to working hard to achieve budget targets established by the Committee, while ensuring that British Columbians continue to have confidence in our well-managed and impartially administered electoral process.

Linda M. Johnson
Deputy Chief Electoral Officer

# The Role and Mandate of Elections BC

Elections BC is the usual name for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. The Chief Electoral Officer is an Officer of the Legislature, and is appointed pursuant to section 4 of the *Election Act*. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the administration of the *Election Act* and the *Recall and Initiative Act*, the conduct of referenda under the *Referendum Act* and the *Constitutional Amendment Approval Act*, and is a member of electoral boundary commissions established under the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*.

The role of Elections BC is much different from that of the other Officers of the Legislature. Whereas their roles are primarily as 'watchdogs', Elections BC has a large operational component. Event administration, planning and logistics, policy and procedure development, training, data collection and maintenance form the core of the office's work. The Chief Electoral Officer's watchdog responsibilities are focused outside government to ensure that participants in the provincial political, electoral and initiative processes comply with the legislation.

The office administers the most comprehensive range of electoral legislation in Canada, with the *Recall and Initiative Act* being unique in the Commonwealth. In performing the duties of the office, staff are constantly aware of the need to ensure transparency, accessibility and impartiality. Public confidence in the administration of all aspects of the electoral process is essential to maintain a healthy democracy.

Elections BC's broad mandate can be divided into the following general areas of activity.

## Event Administration

Elections BC is responsible for ensuring that all elections, referenda, plebiscites, initiative and recall petitions and initiative votes are conducted in accordance with the legislation. District Electoral Officers are appointed and trained to administer elections at the electoral district level under direction of the Chief Electoral Officer. General elections are held on fixed dates under the *Constitution Act*, but by-elections, referenda, plebiscites and recall and initiative campaigns can occur at any time. It is therefore necessary to be in a constant state of readiness for those events.

Logistics and contingency planning are at the center of the activities of the office. Event planning and administration must be flexible to allow for rapid response to emerging issues. Thorough testing of all plans is critical to ensure that voting officials and scrutineers are able to perform their duties effectively and that voters have unfettered access to their democratic rights. Voting procedures are well documented, and a set of comprehensive manuals, guides, forms and training aids are provided to officials for administering electoral events. Voting methodology for referenda and plebiscites are developed by Elections BC staff, in the absence of procedures prescribed by legislation. Elections BC administers multiple events in the average year, often with overlapping time frames.

Administration of electoral and initiative events requires maintenance of electoral district and voting area boundaries. These administrative units are the backbone of much of the work of Elections BC. There are currently 79 electoral districts established by the *Electoral Districts Act*, and they have been subdivided by Elections BC into 8,462 voting areas. To ensure consistency in event administration, and to avoid confusing voters, efforts are made to harmonize provincial voting area boundaries with federal polling divisions, municipal and regional district boundaries, and other administrative demarcations.

## Public Information

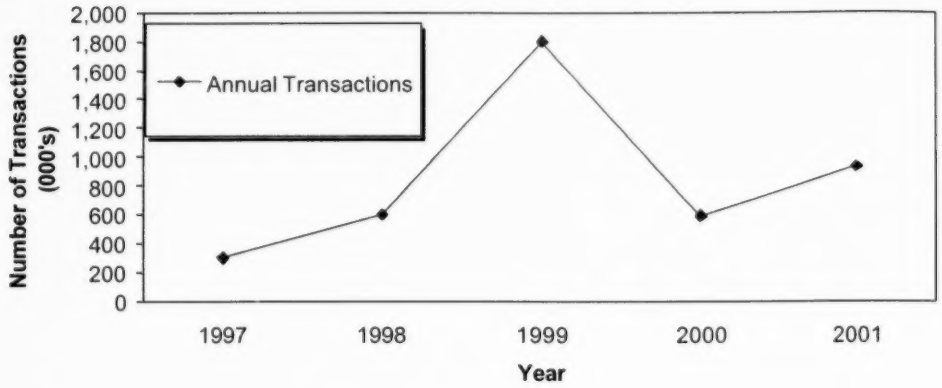
Elections BC reception staff provide information to the public on all aspects of the business. In non-event periods, an average of 2,000 letters, faxes and phone calls are received monthly by Elections BC. During the 2001 general election, over 74,000 calls were received by the toll-free operators in a four week period. Elections BC's comprehensive Web site (http://www.elections.bc.ca) contains many forms and publications, and is a popular site for the public, researchers and the media.

Surveys conducted by MarkTrend Research on behalf of Elections BC in March 1999 and March 2000 have shown that the citizens of British Columbia are generally knowledgeable regarding voter registration procedures and voting options. Elections BC has produced a school kit for use in teaching the electoral process to elementary school students, which has been very well-received. Work is planned for the creation of a package for use in secondary schools. Elections BC's television advertisements during the 2001 general election focused on the importance of voting, and generated considerable positive feedback.

## Voter Registration

Voter registration and voters list maintenance is an important part of day-to-day operations. British Columbia has had a continuous voters list for over 70 years, and was the first provincial jurisdiction in Canada to computerize the voters list. Voters list maintenance is supported by computer files from the Vital Statistics Agency of the Ministry of Health, and the Motor Voter program in which Elections BC receives address updates for voters through the Insurance Corporation of BC. Elections BC is also a participant agency in the Multiple Address Change Web site hosted by government (http://www.addresschange.gov.bc.ca).

**Voter Registration Transactions 1997 - 2001**
**(Adds, changes, and deletions)**




The high mobility of BC residents results in considerable challenges in ensuring on-going currency and accuracy of the voters list, which is critical in administering electoral events - especially the recall and initiative processes. Accuracy of the voters list is also dependent on a comprehensive geo-coded data base of roads and residential addresses to ensure that voters are assigned to the correct electoral district and voting area. Elections BC also maintain a geo-coded data base of commercial and institutional addresses to identify voting places and registration sites.

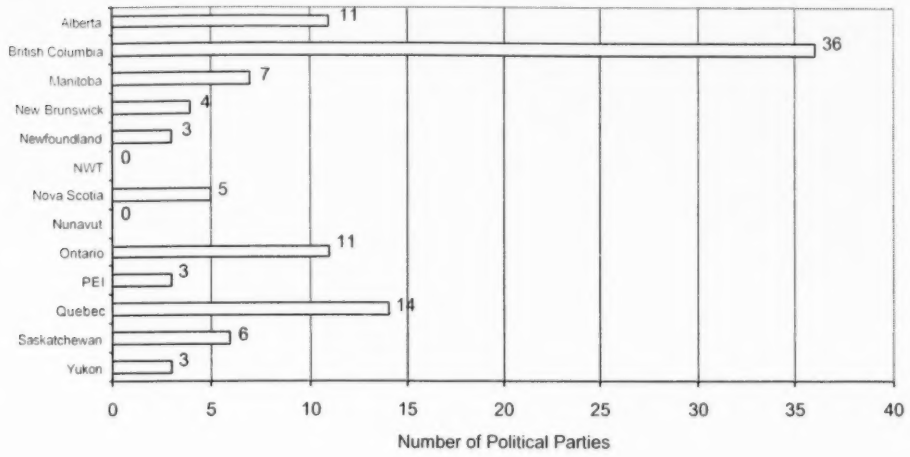
The Provincial Voters List is provided to municipalities upon request for use in administering local government elections. (Elections BC charges a small fee for production of the files, averaging $160 per municipality. The Union of BC Municipalities estimates that it would cost a medium-sized municipality approximately $300,000 to produce their own voters list.) In 2002, it is expected that approximately 70 municipalities will use the Provincial Voters List as their base.

Door-to-door enumeration is a costly and ineffective method of voters list maintenance. In 1999, a province-wide enumeration was conducted by mail with a resulting savings of approximately $4 million. Elections BC will develop strategies that will hopefully permit the cancellation of the 2004 enumeration, for a further savings of over $4 million.

## Electoral Finance Administration

Elections BC is responsible for the registration of political parties, constituency associations, advertising sponsors and other participants in the electoral and initiative processes. British Columbia has the highest number of registered political parties of any electoral jurisdiction in Canada. As of April 2002, there were 36 registered political parties, 150 registered constituency associations and 43 registered advertising sponsors in British Columbia.

**Number of Registered Political Parties by Province and Territory**




All registered political parties, registered constituency associations, candidates and advertising sponsors must file financing reports after an election. After the 2001 general election, over 700 financing reports were received. Registered political parties and constituency associations must also file annual financing reports, and leadership contestants must file reports after a political party leadership contest. Recall proponents, MLAs who are the subject of a recall campaign and recall advertising sponsors must file disclosure reports after a recall campaign. Initiative proponents and opponents and initiative advertising sponsors must also file disclosure reports. Every report is scanned, posted to the Elections BC Web site (http://www.elections.bc.ca), and reviewed for compliance.

Elections BC is required to conduct periodic investigations of the financial affairs of registered political parties, registered constituency associations, candidates, leadership contestants and advertising sponsors. A risk-based analysis is conducted to ensure that audit resources are used in an effective way.

The financing provisions of the *Election Act* and *Recall and Initiative Act* are fully supported by guides and forms to facilitate compliance with the legislation. Workshops are also conducted for financial agents and political entities to assist them in meeting the requirements of the *Election Act*. Through education and outreach efforts, compliance with election financing legislation dramatically improved between the 1996 and 2001 general elections.

# Vision, Mission and Values

## Vision

Elections BC is an efficient, effective and non-partisan organization that ensures the fair and impartial administration of the *Election Act* and *Recall and Initiative Act*. The citizens of British Columbia have confidence in the electoral process and believe that Elections BC acts with equity. The provisions of the *Election Act* and *Recall and Initiative Act* are understood and respected, and British Columbians enjoy unfettered access to their democratic rights established by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

## Mission

To serve the people of British Columbia by ensuring the effective and impartial administration of the electoral process.

## Values

Elections BC respects the rule of law, and works with integrity, transparency, neutrality and independence. Value is placed on honesty, knowledge and professionalism. We operate with fairness and equity and respect individual differences and individual rights.

# Goals

## Innovation in efficient, effective and impartial administration of electoral and initiative legislation

Elections BC must ensure that all aspects of electoral finance and electoral and initiative event administration are in accordance with the legislation. Public confidence in the effective, impartial and transparent administration of the electoral and initiative processes must be maintained, and Elections BC must ensure that clients receive excellent service and value.

## An appropriate state of readiness for electoral and initiative events

Elections BC must be ready to administer an event by ensuring the necessary trained personnel, materiel and infrastructure are available in the right place at the right time.

## All qualified voters have the opportunity to vote

Voters must have unfettered access to their democratic rights. Accessible voting opportunities and knowledgeable officials must be available to all voters.

## Public awareness of the electoral process

Accurate, timely information must be available to the public in a variety of forms to ensure they are aware of the electoral process and their democratic rights. Voters must know what voting and voter registration opportunities are available to them, and how to access information and services.

## A current, complete and accurate voters list

The voters list must be current, complete and accurate to ensure that voters can exercise their right to vote and to participate in recall and initiative campaigns. A current, complete and accurate voters list ensures that voters are assigned to the appropriate electoral district and voting area, and that only eligible voters are permitted to participate in electoral events. List maintenance must be effective and economical, and access to voter information must be restricted to ensure individual privacy is protected.

Currency is a measure of how up-to-date the list is; completeness is a measure of how many eligible individuals are on the list; accuracy is a measure of the correctness of voter data. Each element must be present for effective electoral administration.

# Environment

## Issues

As with any organization, Elections BC is significantly affected by its environment, both external and internal. To continue to meet its mandate effectively, the office must respond appropriately to changing demographics and expectations, and take advantage of opportunities afforded by new technologies.

**Several issues external to Elections BC affect the organization and the way it conducts its business**

**Calls for changes to the electoral system**

Growing dissatisfaction with the first-past-the-post electoral system is generating considerable interest in electoral reform. Government has stated they intend to appoint a Citizens' Assembly to examine electoral reform. Public interest in this issue is increasing, and an application for an initiative petition with regard to proportional representation received approval in principle on March 14, 2002.

**Treaty Negotiations Referendum**

Elections BC conducted a referendum on treaty negotiations in the Spring of 2002. The referendum was conducted by mail – the largest vote-by-mail ever conducted by a Canadian provincial jurisdiction. The opportunity to vote on an issue, the comparatively low cost and the convenience of vote-by-mail methodology may raise expectations of future public consultations in this manner.

**Voter turnout and participation**

Voter turnout at traditional ballot box elections is declining throughout North America. Although turnout at BC provincial general elections has been consistent for the last two elections, the continental trend must be monitored and successful strategies identified to maintain strong turnout levels.

Youth participation rates continue to decline in British Columbia and throughout North America. In order to ensure strong democratic institutions in the future, participation by all segments of the population is critical.

**New voting technologies**

As the public becomes increasingly familiar with the Internet and other new technologies, there are increased expectations that we will adopt electronic voting, Internet voting, and other technologies. Elections BC will continue to explore such measures, and is open to change. However, we must balance technological advances against the need for universally accessible and secure voting methods.

**Changing demographics**

The population of British Columbia has changed considerably in the last decade and will continue to do so. Immigration to our province will become the main driver of population growth as the birth rate continues to decline. In 1996, 24.5% of British Columbians were immigrants to Canada. The need for multilingual voting materials and election officials is increasing. Many new Canadians mistrust democratic institutions or bring with them divergent attitudes towards political campaigns, increasing the need for public education regarding our electoral process.

The percentage of the population over the age of 65 continues to rise in British Columbia. As the population ages, voters will increasingly have mobility and communication issues that must be addressed to ensure access to the electoral process. The cost of providing accessible voting opportunities will increase with added demands for special services to meet the needs of these voters.

**Electoral finance**

Non-compliance with electoral financing laws is declining, but continuing problems create an investigative burden on Elections BC. Compliance and enforcement are essential, as electoral finance irregularities erode public confidence in political institutions. Electoral legislation is typically prescriptive, and many campaigns are run by volunteers. This can make it difficult to ensure that campaign finance laws are understood and complied with.

**Use of the Voters List**

The legislated requirement that the voters list be used for juror selection lists prevents access to the federal voters list. This precludes Elections BC from entering into a partnership agreement with Elections Canada to share voter data. We believe that access to federal voter data would greatly enhance the currency and accuracy of the voters list at a nominal cost, and possibly lead to the cancellation of the 2004 enumeration – a potential savings of $4 million.

**Shared services**

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services has expressed a desire that all statutory officers move to a shared services model. The use of shared resources between statutory officers is not without precedent. Following the 2001 general election, two staff from the Office of the Auditor General assisted Elections BC in the compliance reviews of election financing reports, with a resulting savings to Elections BC of over $17,000. The Auditor General previously provided human resources and payroll services to Elections BC, and discussions are currently underway with the Auditor General regarding resumption of shared services in the areas of payroll for regular employees, human resources and professional development.

In its December 2001 report, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services stated that "the Committee also thinks it is important for three statutory officers – the Auditor General, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner – to

remain in separate locations so as not to compromise their respective mandates." However, Elections BC is considering moving to the same building as other statutory officers to permit the sharing of some common areas that will not impact the operations of the office.

Elections BC uses central government services in a number of areas to reduce costs and ensure consistency with government standards. This includes the use of the Queen's Printer, the Purchasing Commission, BC Mail Plus, BC Buildings Corporation and Common Information Technology Services (CITS) for maintenance of our mainframe computer systems, facility services of our computer servers and provision of email services.

**Data sharing**

Significant savings to the taxpayers of BC have been realized through data sharing with other government bodies and local governments, and through a partnership agreement with the Government Agents branch of the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. The Government Agents, in their capacity as District Registrars of Voters, provide on-going access to voter registration and other Elections BC services at no cost to the organization between elections.

**Outsourcing**

It is most cost-effective to use a private sector payroll provider for the temporary staff Elections BC hires for projects and events. The payroll data entry function for election officials has been delegated to District Electoral Officers during elections to reduce costs and wait times. Volume data entry of voter registration activity is contracted out, and the address data base is maintained by a private sector contractor. Each solution has proven to be more cost-effective than undertaking that work within the public sector. Elections BC continues to look for opportunities to out-source activities where economies and efficiencies may be realized without undue risk.

**Budget reduction impacts**

The impact of restructuring to meet budget targets has not yet been fully assessed, and may result in additional costs during an electoral event. As each program area has been reviewed to identify opportunities for cost efficiencies, care has been taken to ensure that no voter will be administratively disfranchised as a result. However, the long term effects of program changes must be carefully monitored to ensure clients' rights are protected.

**In addition to external factors, there are internal issues faced by Elections BC**

**Staffing and training**

Delays in obtaining classifications for staff positions, recruitment lags and the loss of regional staff have created a dependency on contractors and temporary staff, resulting in increased costs and risks. The loss of corporate knowledge through downsizing impedes efficiency in program delivery, and the need to engage large numbers of temporary staff during events creates training challenges. Electoral administration is a "business of details", and electoral

legislation is prescriptive and complex. Therefore, well-trained staff are essential to efficient and effective program delivery. The availability of experienced, knowledgeable staff to develop and deliver specialized training programs, and access to funding for training activities, continues to be an issue.

**Office space**

Overcrowding in headquarters was further exacerbated by the closure of Elections BC's four regional offices and the relocation of four additional staff to headquarters. Inadequate office and storage space results in inefficiencies by requiring the use of multiple temporary offices off-site. Elections BC is currently working with the BC Buildings Corporation to identify suitable and available locations within its budget, with relocation anticipated in 2003. It is hoped that other statutory officers will be in the same location to facilitate shared resources or services.

## Opportunities, Challenges and Risks

### Key opportunities

- The introduction of fixed dates for provincial general elections will greatly improve Elections BC's ability to effectively and efficiently plan for and administer these events.
- The development of cost reduction strategies has identified opportunities for improvement and efficiency.
- Shared data resources provide considerable savings and efficiencies. Access to federal voter data would enhance the quality of the voters list while meeting the government's objective of shared resources.

### Key challenges

- Uncertainty regarding electoral reform and legislative amendments impairs the office's ability to plan.
- The unpredictable timing of by-elections, referenda and recall and initiative campaigns results in unexpected resource pressures and affects the ability to plan and manage efficiently.
- Lack of access to the federal voters list and the growing trend toward voter registration in conjunction with voting makes it difficult to ensure currency, completeness and accuracy of the voters list on a continuous basis.
- The consolidation of operations requires the office to change the way in which electoral events are administered, and to find efficient and effective ways to avoid compromising accessibility of the electoral process for clients.

- Heightened awareness of security issues, combined with the experience in conducting the referendum on treaty negotiations, has established a need to address security matters in all aspects of the office's work.

**Key risks**

- Reduced financial resources have necessitated a reorganization of Elections BC, including the closure of our four regional offices, staff lay-offs and a reduction of projects and event preparation work undertaken. Further budget reductions will result in Elections BC being unable to adequately prepare for the May 17, 2005 general election.

- Public confidence in the electoral process is vital to a healthy democracy in British Columbia. Voters, political entities and political participants must have confidence in the integrity of the electoral process and in the results. There is a risk that public confidence and our credibility may be damaged if a lack of resources results in Elections BC being unable to adequately prepare for elections, recalls and initiatives or compromises the quality of the Provincial Voters List.

# Business Cycle

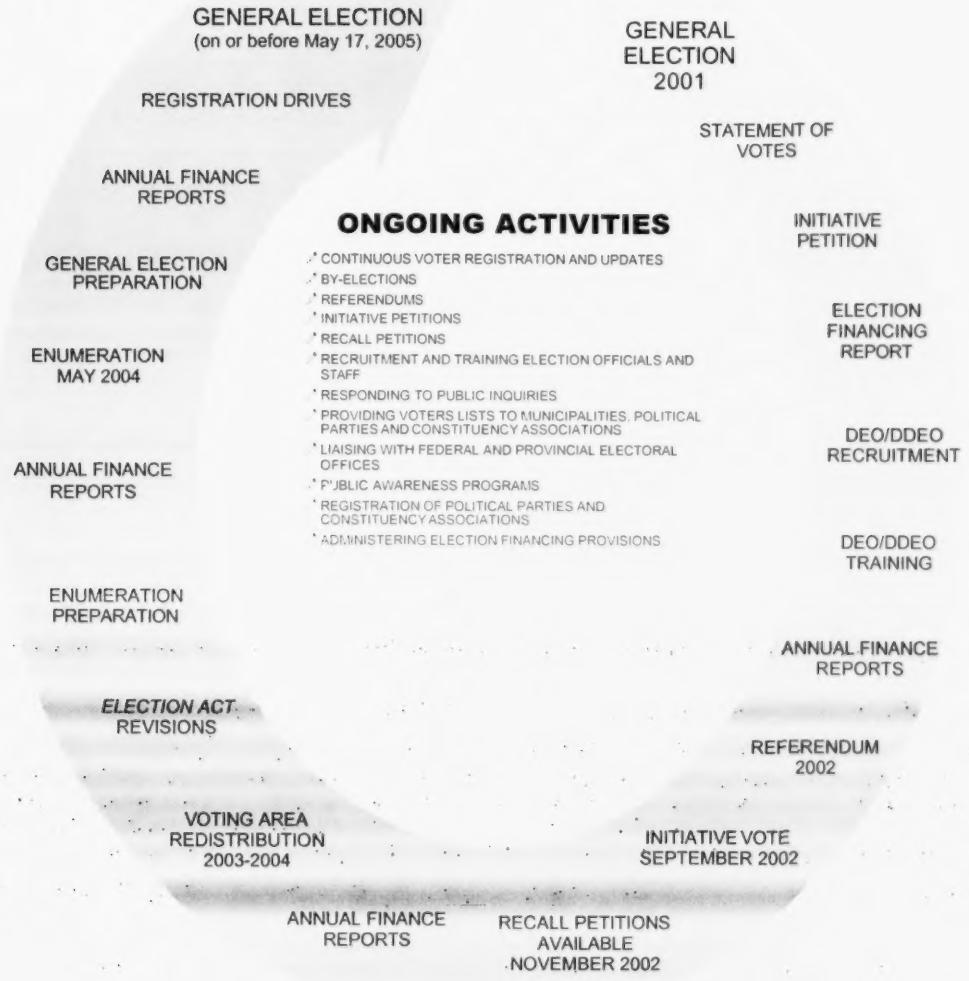
The business cycle of Elections BC extends from the issuance of writs for one general election to the issuance of writs for the next general election. The *Constitution Act* now establishes that general elections will be held every four years. Between general elections, the work of Elections BC can be divided into three general categories; on-going activities, on-demand event administration, and calendared event preparation and administration.

On-going activities are those programs and tasks that provide the infrastructure necessary to administer any event. These include voter education, voters list maintenance, address and boundary maintenance and other event-readiness activities. Many events are externally driven, with little or no preparation time available within the legislated time frames. It is therefore necessary for Elections BC to be ready to administer events at all times, and event-readiness activities are a critical aspect of on-going activities.

"On-demand" events include recall petitions, by-elections, initiative petitions, referendums and other events that cannot be predicted with certainty. Elections BC administers at least one such event each year between general elections. Due to the uncertainty of timing of these events, preparatory activities are undertaken on a continuous basis as part of Elections BC's on-going programs.

Calendared events include general elections, initiative votes and enumerations. The timing of these events is legislated, and preparation for and administration of these events can be planned well in advance. Activities associated with preparation for calendared events are typically performed in the fiscal year preceding the event, and include training, development and printing of forms, guides and manuals, development of public information materials including media advertising plans, packaging of materials in preparation for shipping and establishing contracts with suppliers of equipment.

# ELECTIONS BRITISH COLUMBIA
# BUSINESS CYCLE



# Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

| Goal | Core Business Area |
|---|---|
| 1. Innovation in efficient, effective and impartial administration of electoral and initiative legislation | All divisions |
| 2. An appropriate state of readiness for electoral and initiative events | All divisions |
| 3. All qualified voters have the opportunity to vote | Electoral Geography<br>Electoral Operations<br>Communications<br>Voter Registration<br>Information Technology |
| 4. Public awareness of the electoral process | Communications |
| 5. A current, complete and accurate voters list | Voter Registration<br>Electoral Geography<br>Information Technology<br>Communications |

For each of the five major goals, the core business area(s) responsible, primary objectives, strategies and performance measures are identified. This is not an exhaustive list, as event readiness and voters list management are comprised of hundreds of specific tasks. It is hoped that this sample list will identify major areas of activity, as well as providing insight into the broad range of activities associated with electoral administration.

## Goal 1: Innovation in efficient, effective and impartial administration of electoral and initiative legislation

| Core Business Area | | Objective | Strategy | Performance Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Electoral Finance | 1.1 | Compliance with filing requirements for political entities. | Provide training sessions and detailed guides for financial agents to facilitate compliance. | Web-based training available by March 30/03; guides updated annually. |
| Electoral Finance | 1.2 | Compliance with legislated audit and investigation requirements. | Perform risk-based audits on political entities; conduct investigations upon complaints/evidence of contraventions. | At least one political party or constituency association audited each year; complaints handled promptly and investigated as appropriate. |
| All divisions | 1.3 | Corporate knowledge and expertise in event administration, relevant legislation, international trends and voting technology. | Attend workshops and conferences; study and adopt best practices; maintain information sharing network with other electoral jurisdictions. | Staff are knowledgeable and have access to current information; able to respond quickly to issues and develop innovative solutions. |
| All divisions | 1.4 | Cost-effective event administration. | Analyze cost drivers in event administration and identify and implement cost reduction strategies that do not impede client access to the electoral process. | Expenditure guidelines established and monitored for DEOs DRVs. Divisions meet event budget targets. |
| Electoral Geography | 1.5 | Voting area boundaries are maintained. | Review voting area populations; redistribute as required. | 90% of voting areas below 400 voters by March 31/04. |
| Electoral Geography | 1.6 | Appropriate map products are available. | Consult with DEOs, DRVs and other clients to identify their requirements. | Consultations completed by September 30/03. Products developed and produced as required. |
| Electoral Operations | 1.7 | Nomination process is administered efficiently and effectively. | Nomination materials available on-line; process fully documented; staff and DEOs well-trained. | Nomination forms on EBC Web site by March 31/03. Standing nominations processed within 24 hours of receipt; certificates of candidacy issued in a timely way; issues resolved promptly. |
| Electoral Finance | 1.8 | Political entities and advertising sponsors are registered and data updated efficiently. | Registration information available on-line; forms streamlined to facilitate updating. | Applications for registration processed within one week of receipt. |

## Goal 2: An appropriate state of readiness for electoral and initiative events

| Core Business Area | | Objective | Strategy | Performance Measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Electoral Operations | 2.1 | All necessary officials are appointed. | Recruit District Electoral Officers (DEOs) and Deputies as vacancies occur. | Full roster of DEOs and Deputies by October 31/02. Subsequent vacancies filled within 60 days of occurring. |
| Electoral Operations<br>Voter Registration | 2.2 | All District Electoral Officers, Deputy DEOs, District Registrars of Voters (DRVs) and Deputy DRVs are trained. | Provide training and manuals to all DEOs, DDEOs, DRVs and DDRVs. | All appointees have a current manual, and their knowledge is tested periodically. DEOs and DDEOs receive orientation training by December 31/02 and 2 days of training per year. DRVs/DDRVs receive 2 days of training in 2004/05. |
| Electoral Operations<br>Communications | 2.3 | Provide consistent training of election officials. | Develop election official workbook for use by District Electoral Officers. | Workbook draft completed by March 31/03; finalized and printed by March 31/04. |
| Electoral Operations<br>Voter Registration<br>Electoral Finance<br>Communications | 2.4 | All voting event documents and materiel are current. | Review documents and materiel and associated distribution formulas; revise as required. | Dockets for all voting event documents and materiel signed off by March 31/03. |
| Electoral Finance<br>Electoral Operations<br>Voter Registration<br>Communications | 2.5 | Sufficient materiel is on hand. | Review inventory and order materiel as required. | Sufficient stock on hand at all times for 2 by-elections, 2 recall petitions and 2 initiative petitions; general election materiel on hand by December 31/04. |
| Electoral Finance<br>Electoral Operations<br>Voter Registration<br>Information Technology | 2.6 | Equipment plans are in place to support DEO/DRV field operations. | Establish requirements for DEO office equipment and DEO/DRV telephones. | Consultations with DRVs and DEOs completed by March 31/04; contracts in place by December 31/04. |
| Electoral Finance<br>Communications | 2.7 | Political parties, constituency associations and other participants are aware of event-period reporting requirements. | Maintain guides and reporting materials for use by financial agents. | Guides and reporting materials on Web site and in hard copy are reviewed for currency every 6 months. |
| Electoral Finance | 2.8 | Financial and administrative infrastructure is in place to support local and field operations. | Establish and document financial and administrative processes for electoral events. | Processes and procedures are reviewed and documented by March 31/03; review for currency annually. |

## Goal 2: An appropriate state of readiness for electoral and initiative events (continued)

| Core Business Area | | Objective | Strategy | Performance Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Electoral Geography<br>Voter Registration | 2.9 | Address register is current, complete and accurate. | Establish, document and maintain update mechanisms with data providers. Ensure address resolution mechanisms are maintained. | Establishment of mechanism and documentation complete by December 31/02; update mechanisms reviewed annually. Address resolution is maintained at 95% completeness. |
| Electoral Geography<br>Information Technology<br>Voter Registration | 2.10 | Addresses not linked to registered voters are available for enumerations and other voter registration activities. | Identify 'empty' addresses through internal and external data matching. | 'Empty' address file available as required. |
| Electoral Geography | 2.11 | Road network, administrative boundaries and other background data is maintained at event-ready level. | Exchange road data with Elections Canada. Conduct periodic reviews of currency and completeness. Ensure database infrastructure is maintained. | Review and update of existing MOU and setup of exchange network complete by September 30/03. Data exchanged and data quality sampled quarterly. Maintenance agreements established with contractors and government organizations. |
| Communications | 2.12 | Communications strategies are event-ready. | Have agency of record in place; develop communications strategy. | Agency of record in place at all times; strategies in place 6 months prior to anticipated events. |
| Voter Registration<br>Information Technology | 2.13 | Signature database is current. | Scan and adjudicate all new signatures into data base on a regular basis. | Signature data base current to last quarter. |

## Goal 3: All qualified voters have the opportunity to vote

| Core Business Area | | Objective | Strategy | Performance Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Electoral Geography<br>Electoral Operations<br>Voter Registration | 3.1 | Voting opportunities are accessible to voters who are mobility impaired. | Consult with DEOs and DRVs to identify new, or changes to existing, special voting areas. | Consultations and review done annually. |
| Electoral Operations | 3.2 | Voting places are accessible and secure. | Audit voting places to identify accessibility and security issues and select alternate locations where necessary. Communicate with school boards to ensure availability of facilities while addressing student safety concerns re: voting in schools. | 100% of advance voting locations are wheelchair accessible; 90% of general voting locations are wheelchair accessible. Adequate safeguards are in place to protect students in schools used as voting places. |
| Electoral Operations | 3.3 | Military personnel deployed outside the Province have the opportunity to vote. | Liaise with the Department of National Defence to identify strategies for voting administration. | Voting materials are successfully delivered to, and returned by, out-of-Province military personnel. |
| Electoral Operations<br>Electoral Geography | 3.4 | Voters in remote communities have access to voting opportunities. | Identify remote communities where voters reside and identify appropriate voting opportunities for those communities. | Review of remote communities completed by March 31/03. Appropriate opportunities identified for each community by March 31/04. |
| Communications | 3.5 | The public has access to information regarding voting opportunities. | Provide toll-free service and a Web site containing relevant information. | Toll-free service available for extended hours during electoral events; voting information and opportunities are accurately listed on Web site. |
| Communications<br>Electoral Operations<br>Information Technology<br>Electoral Geography | 3.6 | All voters are advised of the general voting location for their place of residence. | Geo-reference all residential address to electoral districts and voting areas. Mail 'Where to Vote' cards to registered voters and to all other residential addresses where no voters are currently registered during a voting event. | 98% of residential addresses are correctly geo-coded March 31/03. 'Where to Vote' cards are delivered to all appropriate addresses prior to General Voting Day for a voting event. |

## Goal 4: Public awareness of the electoral process

| Core Business Area | | Objective | Strategy | Performance Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communications | 4.1 | Future voters are aware of their democratic rights. | Develop material for use by schools to communicate voting rights to under-18 year olds. | Materials developed and tested by September 30/03. Kits distributed to all schools for Grade 11 and 12 students by September 30/04. |
| Communications | 4.2 | Information regarding the electoral process is accessible to the public, news media, political parties and other stakeholder and special interest groups. | Maintain a comprehensive and current Web site; maintain informational material for the public; enquiry clerks and toll-free information operators are hired and trained to provide public information. | Web content is reviewed and updated as required; publications and forms are reviewed and updated as required; Annual Reports and event-specific reports are produced in a timely way. |
| Communications | 4.3 | Ethnic groups are aware of the electoral process. | Identify stakeholder groups and establish partnerships to facilitate communications. | Aboriginal, Chinese-Canadian and Indo-Canadian liaisons are established by September 30/03. |
| Communications | 4.4 | The media has access to complete and up-to-date information on current electoral issues. | Issue news releases and backgrounders. | News releases and backgrounders are issued in a timely way; news releases are posted on the Web site on the same day they are issued. |

## Goal 5: A current, complete and accurate voters list

| Core Business Area | | Objective | Strategy | Performance Measures |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Voter Registration | 5.1 | Use external data sources to update the voters list. | Use ICBC and Vital Statistics Agency data to maintain the currency and accuracy of the list. Gain access to federal voter data by restricting permitted uses of the voters list. | Updates to the voters list using data from ICBC and the Vital Statistics Agency are performed quarterly. The match rate to ICBC files is at least 80%. A request for legislation is submitted by June 30/02 to facilitate access to federal voter data. |
| Voter Registration Communications | 5.2 | Provide low cost, continuous public access to voter registration or updating. | Use the government Multiple Address Change service to receive voter updates; voter record updating and requests for registration available on Elections BC Web site. | Voter record updates from Multiple Address Change are processed monthly; unregistered voters are sent application forms. Web updates and requests processed daily. |
| Voter Registration Electoral Geography | 5.3 | Voter data meets legislated requirements. | Identify voter records with missing data and follow-up with voters; ensure voters are linked to the correct residential address through external data matching . | 98% of voter records have all required data elements; 90% are correctly linked to residential addresses. |
| Electoral Geography | 5.4 | The voters list accurately identifies voters' electoral districts and voting areas. | Residential addresses are geo-referenced to electoral districts and voting areas. | 98% of residential addresses are correctly geo-coded March 31 03. |

# Government Priorities

Government has stated that one of their priorities is to ensure an open and democratic government. The New Era document and the June 25, 2001 letter from the Premier to the Attorney General identify a number of priorities that affect the work of Elections BC. These include:

- ensuring equal, non-discriminatory voting rights for all Canadians in respect of governments that rule their lives
- amending the recall and initiative legislation to make it more workable
- appointment of a Citizens' Assembly for Electoral Reform, and, if it recommends changes to the electoral system, that option will be put to province-wide referendum
- amending the *Election Act* to eliminate loopholes on disclosures of financial contributions, repeal third party advertising restrictions, and outlaw donations from charities
- banning all non-essential government advertising in the four-month period prior to the general election.

In the Report on the 37th Provincial General Election, the Chief Electoral Officer has also recommended amendments to the *Election Act* to address administrative and procedural issues.

It is anticipated that the work of the Citizens' Assembly will have an impact on Elections BC, as this office may be called upon to provide information to that Assembly on the administration of a variety of electoral models. Additionally, Elections BC will be responsible for the conduct of any referenda resulting from the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly.

# Resources

The activities of Elections BC are driven by the legislation it administers and the associated actions of its clients. In consideration of the unpredictable nature of its work, the *Election Act* and *Recall and Initiative Act* establish that all necessary expenses required for the administration of those Acts must be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. In its December 2001 report, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services commented, "The Committee recognizes that the budgets of Elections BC, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and the Police Complaint Commissioner are 'demand driven.' Therefore we think their requests for contingency funding for unpredictable events are legitimate ones. Instead of approaching Treasury Board, as in the past, we suggest that where circumstances warrant, a statutory officer who needs to access the money set aside for contingencies could simply notify the Chair of the Finance Committee in writing, indicating the reason(s) for using this funding."

Although always cognizant of the need for fiscal prudence and accountability, it is clearly not possible for Elections BC to control these statutory costs in a significant way, as the timing, participation rates and frequency of elections, by-elections, and recall and initiative petitions are generally beyond the control of this office. While funding for specific events is available on a contingency basis upon commencement of the event, the costs associated with the preparatory activities must be provided for on an on-going basis to ensure that the office is able to meet the demands of an event in an efficient and economical manner. For example, in the first four months of the current fiscal year, over 10 person days were spent on recall preparation, although no recall petitions were currently underway and no funding has been allocated to this activity area.

Some events, such as general elections and enumerations, are calendared. It is known well in advance when the events will occur, and it is possible to predict their costs with some certainty. Preparatory costs can also be predicted and targeted to specific fiscal years. The funding levels for preparation and conduct of these events will vary over Elections BC's four year business cycle.

The baseline budget recommended by the Committee in its December 2001 report was based on the 2001/02 budget, reduced by the general election, by-election, initiative and recall budgets. Unfortunately, an unavoidable amortization increase of $1.5 million dollars was not factored into the baseline. As a result, the 15% reduction on the baseline recommended by the Committee became a *de facto* reduction of 30% in the operating budget for the fiscal year 2002/03. The amortization increase is a result of implementation of the Electoral Information System developed for Elections BC over the past several years. When approval for developing the system was granted by Treasury Board, it was acknowledged that additional funding would be necessary to provide for the amortization costs. Such funding has not been provided, and is now being drawn from operating funds, creating a serious shortfall in the budget and necessitating the deferral of many necessary activities.

The original operating expenditure plan for 2002/03 was $30,308,000, which included $18,000,000 for a referendum. The adjusted projection, removing costs associated with the referendum, by-elections, recall and initiative, was $11,753,000. Based on the Committee's recommendations, Elections BC received an operating budget of $8,589,000 plus $5,000,000 for the referendum for the 2002/03 fiscal year.

In anticipation of, and in response to, the budget reductions, Elections BC will make dramatic organizational changes, significant program cuts and defer a number of event readiness activities.

As a result of these efforts, Elections BC anticipates meeting the budget allocation for the 2002/03 fiscal year. The office also anticipates meeting the 2003/04 target. However, the 2003/04 available operating funds will be at 50% of the 2001/02 baseline due to the impact of amortization.

If Elections BC is to meet the requirements of the current legislation and have an adequate infrastructure in place to administer the 2005 general election, the operating budget must be stabilized for 2004/05 at a level comparable to the 2003/04 budget target.

In addition to on-going operations, in 2004/05, a province-wide enumeration must be conducted unless the voters list is sufficiently current for the Chief Electoral Officer to recommend its cancellation. Additionally, considerable 'ramping up' is essential in 2004/05 to be election-ready, including selection of voting places and registration sites, developing and testing software and stocking and packaging all necessary election supplies. Funding for these activities can be dealt with in the same manner as "on-demand" events, such as by-elections, by advising the Committee of our intended expenditures prior to the commencement of the event. A full reporting of "statutory" expenditures related to event administration and preparation will be provided.

The following pages provide a Statement of Operations for the previous two fiscal years, and a Summary Financial Outlook by business area for the 2002/03 to 2004/05 fiscal years.

# Financial Plan

## Statement of Operations

| | 2000/01 Budget | 2000/01 Actual | 1999/00 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|
| | $ | $ | $ |
| **Funding** | | | |
| Voted appropriation | 9,976,000 | 9,976,000 | 11,935,000 |
| **Expenses** | | | |
| Salaries of permanent and temporary employees | 2,132,646 | 3,447,299 | 3,236,424 |
| Employee benefits | 479,986 | 469,379 | 530,306 |
| | 2,612,632 | 3,916,678 | 3,766,730 |
| Travel | 100,000 | 126,699 | 55,178 |
| Professional services | 75,100 | 637,052 | 456,965 |
| Information systems | 485,534 | 2,257,436 | 1,970,892 |
| Office and business expenses | 212,400 | 609,825 | 3,068,767 |
| Informational advertising and publications | - | 1,850 | - |
| Statutory advertising and publications | - | 839,186 | 349,754 |
| Operating equipment and vehicles | 26,650 | 7,341 | 580,418 |
| Amortization | 662,000 | 727,704 | 1,225,909 |
| Building occupancy | 880,000 | 746,106 | 699,476 |
| Statutory expenditures (note 1) | 4,921,684 | - | - |
| | 9,976,000 | 9,869,877 | 12,174,089 |
| **Funding returned** | - | 106,123 | (239,089) |

Note 1: Prior to 2002/03, Elections BC budgeted statutory expenditures to the program level only. Although this amount was not budgeted to the stob level, expenditures were coded to stobs.

## Summary Financial Outlook

| Notes[1] | | 2001/02 (actual) $ | 2002/03 (budget) $ | 2003/04 (planned) $ | 2004/05 (planned) $ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ON-GOING OPERATING COSTS** | | | | |
| | **Funding** | | | | |
| | Core appropriation | 10,012,000 | 8,589,000 | 7,008,400 | 5,506,600 |
| | **Total funding for on-going operating costs** | 10,012,000 | 8,589,000 | 7,008,400 | 5,506,600 |
| | **Expenses for on-going operating costs** | | | | |
| 1 | Salaries and benefits of permanent employees | 2,658,542 | 2,173,000 | 2,314,000 | 2,361,000 |
| 2 | Amortization | 1,845,055 | 2,752,000 | 1,908,000 | 2,007,000 |
| 3 | Building occupancy charges | 707,139 | 872,000 | 491,000 | 479,000 |
| 4 | Office expenses and telecommunications | 205,741 | 446,000 | 327,000 | 334,000 |
| 5 | Event readiness program | 115,089 | 211,000 | 207,000 | 211,000 |
| 6 | Address and boundary maintenance | 1,088,827 | 899,000 | 800,000 | 770,000 |
| 7 | Investigations | 74,108 | 75,000 | 75,000 | 77,000 |
| 8 | Voters list maintenance | 607,859 | 663,000 | 443,000 | 415,000 |
| 9 | Political entity reporting | 63,250 | 246,000 | 153,000 | 145,000 |
| 10 | Officer salary and benefits | 209,313 | 212,000 | 220,000 | 231,000 |
| 11 | Voter education | 22,283 | 40,000 | 70,400 | 25,000 |
| 12 | EIS non-capital | 419,369 | - | - | - |
| 13 | Special projects | 67,184 | - | - | - |
| 14 | Exit costs due to restructuring and workforce adjustment | 926,931 | - | - | - |
| | **Total expenses for on-going operating costs** | 9,010,690 | 8,589,000 | 7,008,400 | 7,055,000 |
| | **On-going funding returned** | **1,001,310** | **-** | **-** | **(1,548,400)** |
| | **CALENDARED EVENTS** | | | | |
| | **Funding for calendared events** | | | | |
| | 2001 general election | 23,035,000 | - | - | - |
| | 2004 enumeration | - | - | - | - |
| | 2005 general election preparation | - | - | - | - |
| | 2005 general election | - | - | - | - |
| | **Total funding for calendared events** | 23,035,000 | - | - | - |
| | **Expenses for calendared events** | | | | |
| | 2001 general election | 18,129,588 | - | - | - |
| | 2004 enumeration | - | - | 648,000 | 4,500,000 |
| | 2005 general election preparation | - | - | - | 1,817,000 |
| | 2005 general election | - | - | - | - |
| | **Total expenses for calendared events** | 18,129,588 | - | 648,000 | 6,317,000 |
| | **Calendared event funding returned** | **4,905,412** | **-** | **(648,000)** | **(6,317,000)** |
| | **Total expenses for on-going operating costs and calendared events** | **27,140,278** | **8,589,000** | **7,656,400** | **13,372,000** |

## Summary Financial Outlook (continued)

### ON-GOING OPERATING COSTS - NOTES

1. Salaries and benefits of permanent employees.

2. Amortization for the Electoral Information System, the Recall and Initiative Verification System (RIVERS), Motor Voter System and other electoral and event systems, office computer systems and furniture.

3. BC Buildings Corporation charges for office and warehouse rent.

4. Office expenses, telephones, Common Information Technology Services (CITS) charges for office network services and email, supplies, equipment, postage, courier, bank charges, staff training, and travel.

5. District Electoral Officer training and stipends, warehouse maintenance, system maintenance (RIVERS), signature database maintenance, forms and guides, materiel and supplies in preparation for potential by-elections, recall and initiative petitions and initiative votes.

6. Maintenance and updating of address register and electoral district and voting area boundary maintenance. For 2003/04, includes $107,000 in Common Information Technology Services (CITS) charges.

7. Investigations of the financial affairs of political entities in accordance with section 276 of the *Election Act* and investigations in response to complaints or allegations in accordance with section 277.

8. Voters list updates, voter registration, software subscriptions and voters list system maintenance. For 2003/04, includes $218,000 in Common Information Technology Services (CITS) charges.

9. Reviews of financial reports of political entities. Guides, forms, and training for political entities, financial agents and auditors. Registration and updates of political parties, constituency associations, advertising sponsors. Maintenance of scanning and financial report electronic disclosure system.

10. Salary and benefits of the Chief Electoral Officer.

11. Voter outreach programs, Grade 11 school kit.

12. Maintenance and support of the Electoral Information System. For years after 2001/02, these costs are reported in the applicable business activity.

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[1] See the following page for detailed information on notes 1-14.

13. Special projects including updating the Inventory Distribution System and external data processing.

14. Voluntary Departure and Early Retirement Incentive Program payments, costs related to the physical closure of four regional offices, write-off of electronic filing system.

## Summary Financial Outlook (continued)

| POTENTIAL EVENTS<br>Funding | 2001/02 (actual)<br>$ | 2002/03 (budget)<br>$ | 2003/04 (planned)<br>$ | 2004/05 (planned)<br>$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| By-election | 300,000 | - | - | - |
| Initiative petition | 224,000 | 225,000 | - | - |
| Initiative vote | - | - | - | - |
| Recall petition | 10,000 | - | - | - |
| Referendum | - | 5,000,000 | - | - |
| **Total funding for potential events** | 534,000 | 5,225,000 | - | - |
| **Expenses for potential events** | | | | |
| By-election | - | - | 306,000 | 313,000 |
| Initiative petition | 12,900 | 225,000 | 230,000 | 235,000 |
| Initiative vote | - | - | - | 19,300,000 |
| Recall petition | - | - | 32,000 | 33,000 |
| Referendum | 1,855,107 | 3,091,000 | - | - |
| **Total expenses for potential events** | 1,868,007 | 3,316,000 | 568,000 | 19,881,000 |
| **Potential event funding returned** | **(1,334,007)** | **1,909,000** | **(568,000)** | **(19,881,000)** |
| **CAPITAL ASSETS**<br>**Funding** | (note 1) | | (note 2) | (note 2) |
| Personal computer hardware and software | 180,000 | 336,000 | 145,000 | 145,000 |
| Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software | 2,213,000 | 1,237,000 | 852,000 | 852,000 |
| Office furniture and equipment | 331,000 | 320,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 |
| Tenant improvements | 690,000 | 652,000 | - | - |
| **Total funding for capital assets** | 3,414,000 | 2,545,000 | 1,005,000 | 1,005,000 |
| **Expenditures for capital assets** | | | | |
| Personal computer hardware and software | 120,447 | 336,000 | 126,000 | 214,000 |
| Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software | 1,356,347 | 1,237,000 | 230,000 | 402,000 |
| Office furniture and equipment | - | 320,000 | 8,000 | 9,000 |
| Tenant improvements | - | 652,000 | - | - |
| **Total expenditures for capital assets** | 1,476,794 | 2,545,000 | 364,000 | 625,000 |
| **Potential capital asset funding returned** | **1,937,206** | **-** | **641,000** | **380,000** |

Note 1: Expenditures are those incurred in 2001/02 and do not include the value of prior years' work in-progress on the Electoral Information System.

Note 2: Funding for capital assets is as established by Elections BC November 2001 Service Plan and the December 2001 Financial Review of Statutory Officers of British Columbia.

# Corporate Structure

Elections BC is dedicated to providing high quality service at low cost. The average salary, and the percentage of staff in management positions, are the lowest of all the offices of the Legislature.

During a general election, the staffing complement increases to approximately 30,000 in a period of four weeks. Over 100 temporary staff were hired for the administration of the treaty negotiations referendum. The "shrink and grow" nature of the business demands a core of highly trained management and administrative staff to coordinate and manage the myriad of details in an event, and to manage the many contracts and projects related to the work of the office.

Elections BC staff are subject area specialists and managers who coordinate the activities of over 200 appointees and 30,000 temporary election and voter registration officials during an electoral event. Staff are responsible for on-going project and contract management, event planning, documentation and training in addition to daily maintenance of the voters list, client data, geographic information and administrative data. Some events and activities are administered "in-house", minimizing dependency on temporary staff and mitigating the associated risks. It is a hands-on organization, and is typical of how electoral administration agencies are structured across Canada.

Government Agents and their senior staff have been appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer as District Registrars of Voters (DRVs) and Deputy DRVs to provide voter registration opportunities to the public in most areas of the province. Elections BC is charged for these services during a general election, but there is no on-going cost associated with these appointments. The Chief Electoral Officer appoints a District Electoral Officer (DEO) for each electoral district to administer elections in their respective constituency. A Deputy District Electoral Officer is also appointed for each electoral district. DEOs receive a monthly fee of $50 for storage of documents and minor out-of-pocket expenses. DEOs and their Deputies are paid a flat fee for administering an election, and are paid per-diems and travel expenses to attend training sessions.

Elections BC is divided into eight divisions, each one with a specific role. The divisions work collaboratively on many activities, and cross-training has been implemented to maximize the ability to respond quickly and effectively with few resources. The total FTE allocation is 48.

## Human Resource Management Plan

| Goal | Objective | Strategy | Outcomes/Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| The organization is structured to maximize the effective use of available FTEs. | FTEs are appropriately assigned to divisions. | Review workloads of divisions to identify where regular staff are required. | The organization structure identifies where FTEs are most effectively assigned. |
| Staff have the skills necessary to perform their jobs well. | Staff have the skills to perform their jobs. | Identify skill requirements for each position as part of job description and classification documentation. Include skills assessment in the recruitment process. Provide skills training as required. | Staff understand job requirements and have the associated skills. Skills required for the job are assessed as part of the recruitment and performance planning and evaluation processes. Training is provided as required. |
| Staff have the knowledge necessary to perform their jobs well. | Staff have knowledge of legislation, policy and procedures at a level appropriate to their positions. Staff are kept informed of project status and activities. | Provide regular in-house training and information to staff. Compile a policy and procedures library and make it available to all staff. | Policies and procedures library established by March 31/03. Monthly workshops are conducted for staff. Regular project summaries are provided. |
| Staff perform at a high level of competence. | Performance standards are communicated to staff and performance is regularly evaluated. | Performance plans are developed for all staff and regular reviews are conducted. | Performance plans and reviews for all regular staff are conducted annually. |

# Appendix A

## Glossary of Terms

| | |
|---|---|
| By-election | An election other than one conducted as part of a general election. |
| Enumeration | The Chief Electoral Officer must arrange for a general enumeration to be conducted, starting on the first Monday in May during the 3rd calendar year after the last general election in all electoral districts for the purpose of registering voters and updating voter registration information. An enumeration may be residence-to-residence visitation or by another method authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer. |
| General election | Elections called on the same date for all electoral districts in the province to elect all Members of the Legislative Assembly. |
| Geo-code | To identify the specific geographic location of an address so it may be linked to an electoral district and voting area. |
| Initiative petition | A petition issued by the Chief Electoral Officer under the *Recall and Initiative Act* to have a proposed law introduced into the Legislative Assembly. |
| Initiative vote | If the Select Standing Committee refers an initiative petition and draft Bill to the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Electoral Officer must hold an initiative vote under the *Recall and Initiative Act*. |
| Plebiscite | An expression of opinion of voters on any matter of public concern. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may direct the holding of a plebiscite and issue the necessary Regulations. A plebiscite is not binding on the government that initiated it. |
| Recall | A petition issued by the Chief Electoral Officer under the *Recall and Initiative Act* to recall a Member of the Legislative Assembly. |
| Referendum | If the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers that an expression of public opinion is desirable on any matter of public interest or concern, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by regulation, order that a referendum be conducted under the *Referendum Act*. A referendum is binding on the government that initiated it. |
| Voters list | The voters list is prepared and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer, and contains the names and residential addresses of registered voters in each electoral district. |